

VHS and Permit Procedures for the Interstate Shipment of Fish

In Effect January, 2007

A new fish health inspection requirement has been placed on your permit (Condition 6 on your permit). Now fish health documents showing VHS free sources of fish are required before interstate shipments of selected live species of fish occurs within the Great Lakes states. A list of these species and other VHS information is available at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/aqua/.

Quick Questions and Answers:

What fish species are affected?

Refer to the web site listed above for a current list of the species covered by the APHIS order. The shipment of these species within Indiana does not require VHS testing. However, if any of these fish species are shipped live, into Indiana from other Great Lakes states VHS testing is required. Other fish health documents or reporting may be required by your permit for diseases other than VHS. Please read all conditions on your permit closely.

If I import fish from outside the Great Lakes states, do I need to test for VHS?

No, only interstate shipments originating from the Great Lakes states need VHS testing. Other states outside of the Great Lakes may require VHS inspection reports on fish imports. These states may see Indiana as a potential source area for spreading VHS, even though VHS has not been detected in Indiana. You may want to check with all states you are exporting live fish into to determine if they require VHS free certification.

How do I get my fish VHS tested so that I may export to other states?

A list of fish health laboratories capable of performing the tests and reporting the results is available on the DNR, Fish and Wildlife web site: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/>. Contact one of these labs to set up a sampling schedule. Make sure there is enough time to sample the fish, complete the lab tests, report the results to DNR, and receive authorization to ship, before fish are imported or exported.

What VHS inspection procedure should be followed to import fish into Indiana?

VHS sampling procedures and tissue analysis must meet or exceed AFS Blue Book standards. These procedures are available on line at: www.fisheries.org/fhs/. Other procedures may be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

How does this affect use of my DNR permit?

There is no change in the use of your permit except for VHS clearance for the species covered by the APHIS order. The production, sale, transport, etc. of species on the APHIS list within the boundaries of Indiana are not affected by this new regulation and do not require VHS certification. Approval of your DNR permit is not authorization to import species on the APHIS list from Great Lakes states. You cannot import one of these species until your VHS fish health report and other accompanying documents have been reviewed and approved by BOAH.

Are commercially caught fish affected by the APHIS order?

Yes, the live interstate shipment of any species on the APHIS list needs VHS certification. Dead or processed fish do not require VHS free certification.

Is VHS certification required for the interstate shipment of fish gametes (eggs or sperm) from species on the APHIS list?

No. However, the DNR has additional disease reporting requirements for trout and salmon gametes. Follow conditions on your DNR permit if you plan to import trout or salmon gametes.

How do I get fish tissue samples collected and analyzed?

The following facilities are capable of processing fish tissue samples for VHS. These facilities should be able to provide people to contact to collect these samples.

ADDL-West Lafayette
406 S. University
West Lafayette, IN 47907
Phone: 765-494-7440
Fax: 765-494-9181

Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture
Division of Animal Health
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708
608-224-4872

Aquatic Animal Health Lab
Michigan State University
S110 Plant Biology Building
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-432-8259

Fish on the APHIS list that will be imported from a Great Lakes state must have laboratory results from a competent laboratory before importation occurs. It is appropriate to use other facilities than the ones listed above but make sure the sampling procedures, staff qualifications, and laboratory procedures meet the expectations identified in the APHIS order.

What procedures should be used to collect samples and to perform laboratory tests?

For importing fish into Indiana in 2007, it is recommended you follow American Fisheries Society Blue Book sampling procedures for the collection of tissue samples from fish. A sample from each lot of fish should include 60 fish. Samples containing less than 60 fish may not be adequate to detect VHS in a hatchery population. Other sampling procedures may be presented for approval, but make sure you allow adequate time for the review of your proposal.

Laboratory results must follow procedures recommended in the APHIS order. The facilities above follow procedures identified in the Order and will be acceptable as long as samples are collected properly. Please closely coordinate the collection of samples with the facility you select to analyze the tissue samples. If you have questions about tissue collection procedures or laboratory procedures please contact: Randy Lang, Division of Fish and Wildlife, office number: 317-232-4094, fax number: 317-232-8150, rlang@dnr.in.gov.

How do I get authorization to import fish into Indiana?

Fill out and send an Application for BOAH Pre-Entry Permit together with 1) a copy of a valid Fish Health Inspection Report on the lot of fish intended for shipment, and 2) a letter from the competent authority for aquatic animal health of the state of origin certifying that this intended shipment of fish has been sampled and tested negative for VHS virus in accordance with AFS Blue Book or OIE standards to BOAH, *Attn: VHS Certification* at fax number: 317-227-0330. You will receive email or fax confirmation of approval or denial of authorization for import of the fish into Indiana. Allow at least two weeks for joint agency review and approval of applications. In case of questions or to obtain an Application for BOAH Pre-Entry Permit, please call the toll free number, 877-747-3038, ext. 310.

What is required to export fish from Indiana?

If you are exporting one of the species on the APHIS list into any State then VHS certification is required. If the species you export is not on the APHIS list then VHS certification may not be required. Requirements for non-listed species can vary from state to state so make sure you know what an individual States requires for non-listed species.